

**THE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES BY RURAL  
DISTRICT COUNCILS: IN SEARCH OF CHALLENGES FACING CHIVI RURAL  
DISTRICT COUNCIL, ZIMBABWE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Rural District Councils (RDCs) were established to promote rural development in their areas of jurisdiction through the provision of social and infrastructural services. Thus, they play a major role in the development of rural areas. However, RDCs are failing to deliver these services. This study sought to investigate the challenges facing Chivi Rural District Council in the provision of social and infrastructural services. Through interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions, the research managed to gather information from RDC workers, NGOs, councilors, responsible ministries, business people and Chivi residents. The research established that a number of factors were constraining the delivery of social and infrastructural services in Chivi District. These included financial deficit, unstable political environment, poor budget performance as well as lack of qualified personnel. These constraints were retarding the development of the district. The study thus found it necessary for the council to improve its capital base, human resource, link planning with budgeting and improve stake holder participation.*

**Key Words:** *Decentralisation, Rural District Councils, Service Delivery, Rural Development*



## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The evolution of the local government system in Zimbabwe dates back to the colonial period when the colonial regime established the Salisbury Sanitary Board in 1891 (Wekwete, 1988). The system was primarily based on the principle of separate development of races, that is, the black majority and the white settlers. The local government was based on the racial division of land which, through a number of pieces of legislation, created urban areas, which were the preserve of whites, Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCFs), which were only settled by whites and Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs), which were settled by blacks and African Purchase Areas (APAs) which were considered African Commercial Farmlands (Patel, 1988). Three types of local authorities emerged and these were Urban Councils(UCs), Rural Councils(RCs) in Large Scale Commercial Farms and African Councils(ACs) catering for blacks in the TTLs and APAs. This system resulted in well developed urban centres and LSCFs and grossly underdeveloped TTLs and APA (Makumbe, 1998). TTLs and APAs were devoid of basic infrastructure such as good roads, schools, clinics, electricity and reticulated water facilities. These were readily available in urban areas and large scale commercial farms.

At independence the government introduced wide-ranging reforms aimed at removing some of the racial considerations of the colonial regime from the local government. A number of pieces of colonial legislation were either amended or repealed and new directives and statutes were issued. The amendment of the District Councils Act (Chapter 231) resulted, inter alia, in the creation of larger but fewer District councils which were presumed to be more viable in terms of their capability to marshal local resources (Makumbe,1996) . However, there was little change to the nature and functions of Rural Councils and there continued to be serious disparities in the level of development between the RCs and DCs.

The most significant change of the post –independence local government system in Zimbabwe's communal areas come about as a result of the 1984 and 1985 Prime Minister's Directive on decentralization and development. These directives and several pieces of legislation resulted in the creation of grassroots structures, the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and the



Ward Development Committees (WADCOS) (Makumbe, 1998). The VIDCOS and WADCOS were intended to provide the grassroots level in rural areas with an opportunity to participate in the decision making process for development planning and implementation for their areas. However, the WADCOS and VIDCOS were ineffective as they did not have corporate and statutory status.

As a further way of removing the racial factor from the local government system after independence, the Zimbabwean government, in 1988 promulgated the Rural District Councils (RDC) Act which amalgamated DCs and RCs to form Rural District Councils (Makumbe, 1998). Thus, RDCs were established to promote rural development through the provision of infrastructure and social services in their areas of jurisdiction. However, RDCs are failing to deliver these services.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Continuous lack of social and infrastructural services by the inhabitants of Chivi has been a major threat to its development. This has led to a number of problems such as the withdrawal of road transport operators due to sub-serviced roads, lack of entrepreneurs in other rural service centres because of lack of electricity, water shortage, lack of essential medicines in the district clinics, unrepaired school buildings and government houses, increased disease outbreaks due to poor sanitation, unclean public toilets at business centres just to name but a few. These problems point to a number of challenges facing the district which will be investigated in this research.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

Chivi Rural District Council is failing to deliver social and infrastructural services. These services include electrification of rural service centres, provision of water for both domestic and industrial use, public toilets and beer halls. The council is also failing to supply the district clinics with drugs and other apparatus for people's welfare. The information is of value to Chivi Rural District Council taking cognizance that they are the responsible authority managing and offering services in the day to day life of rural communities. The information to be provided can also be of importance to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development in its



attempt to direct local government's projects towards the development of rural areas. The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) may use this data especially to co-ordinate their developmental projects targeting to improve the standards of living.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify the social and infrastructural services that are suppose to be provided by Chivi Rural District Council
2. To determine Chivi residents'' views on the nature of social and infrastructure services delivered by Chivi RDC
3. To investigate the challenges constraining the delivery of services by Chivi Rural District Council.
4. To suggest ways of overcoming the challenges on the delivery of social and infrastructural services so as to promote rural development.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **DECENTRALISATION**

Decentralisation is the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to field units of central government ministries and agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area- wide , regional or functional authorities and non-governmental, private or voluntary organizations (Rondinelli etal, 1983). It is a process of dispersing decision making in governance close to the people.

### **TYPES OF DECENTRALISATION**

There are four types of decentralization.

#### **1. Deconcentration**



Deconcentration is the handing over, by central government of some amount of authority or responsibility to lower levels such as the provincial and district levels within the same ministries or agencies of government (Rondinelli et al, 1983). It is an intra-organizational pattern of power relationship (Hyden, 1983). The Provincial Administrator and District Administrator's office in Zimbabwe constitute deconcentrated authority. The field agents to which such authority and responsibility are given will have some discretion regarding the planning and implementation of development programmes and projects.

## **2. Delegation**

This is the transfer of managerial and operational responsibility from central government to semi-autonomous or parastatal organizations created to plan, implement and manage specific services or projects on behalf of government but doing so with a large degree of operational autonomy (Rondinelli et al, 1983). In many developing countries, responsibilities are often transferred to public corporations, regional development agencies, specific project implementation units and single-purpose parastatal bodies (Makumbe, 1996)

## **3. Privatisation**

This is when central government divests itself of some responsibilities and functions and allows voluntary organizations or private enterprises to perform them (Rondinelli et al, 1983 ). Central government completely withdraws from certain activities and allows the private sector to undertake them under market conditions. In some cases, government transfers responsibilities to parallel organizations such as trade associations, professional groups, co-operatives and special interest groups. These parallel organizations are expected to license, regulate or supervise their members in providing the specified goods and services or carrying out specific activities (Makumbe, 1996).

## **4. Devolution**



Devolution is the transfer of legally defined elements of political power to local government units (LGUs) or to specified or functional authorities (Crook and Manor, 1991). The bodies to which such political power is transferred thus have the responsibility to carry out specified or residual functions in their areas of jurisdiction or pertaining to the provision of goods and services of their specialization. Devolved local units are normally autonomous and distinct from central government. Thus devolution refers to an inter-organisational transfer of power from the centre to units outside the normal command structure of central government (Hyden, 1983). The function performed by these local units generally lie outside the direct control of central government which maintains indirect supervision and control of these autonomous units (Rondinelli et al., 1983). This study is primarily concerned with devolution since this is the type of decentralisation that resulted in the creation of local government systems.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Vosloo, Kotze and Jeppe (1974) define local government as a decentralized representative institution with general and specific powers developed upon it and delegated to it by central or regional government in respect of a restricted geographical area within a nation or state and in the exercise of which it is locally responsible and may, to a certain degree act autonomously. Meyer (1999) is of the same view that local government are local democratic units, within a democratic system which are subordinate members of the government vested with prescribed, controlled government power and sources of income to render specific local services and to control and regulate the geographic, social and economic development of defined local areas. Local government is the establishment of a lower sphere of governance for the purpose of executing functions that the central government is too far to carry out effectively (Government of Zimbabwe, 2004). From the above definitions, the Rural District Council is one of the main institutions of local government that is the sub-national level of government.

## **RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS**

According to Bowman and Kearney (2002), a district council is a type of local government among the municipality, towns and townships, councils and school districts. These can be titled



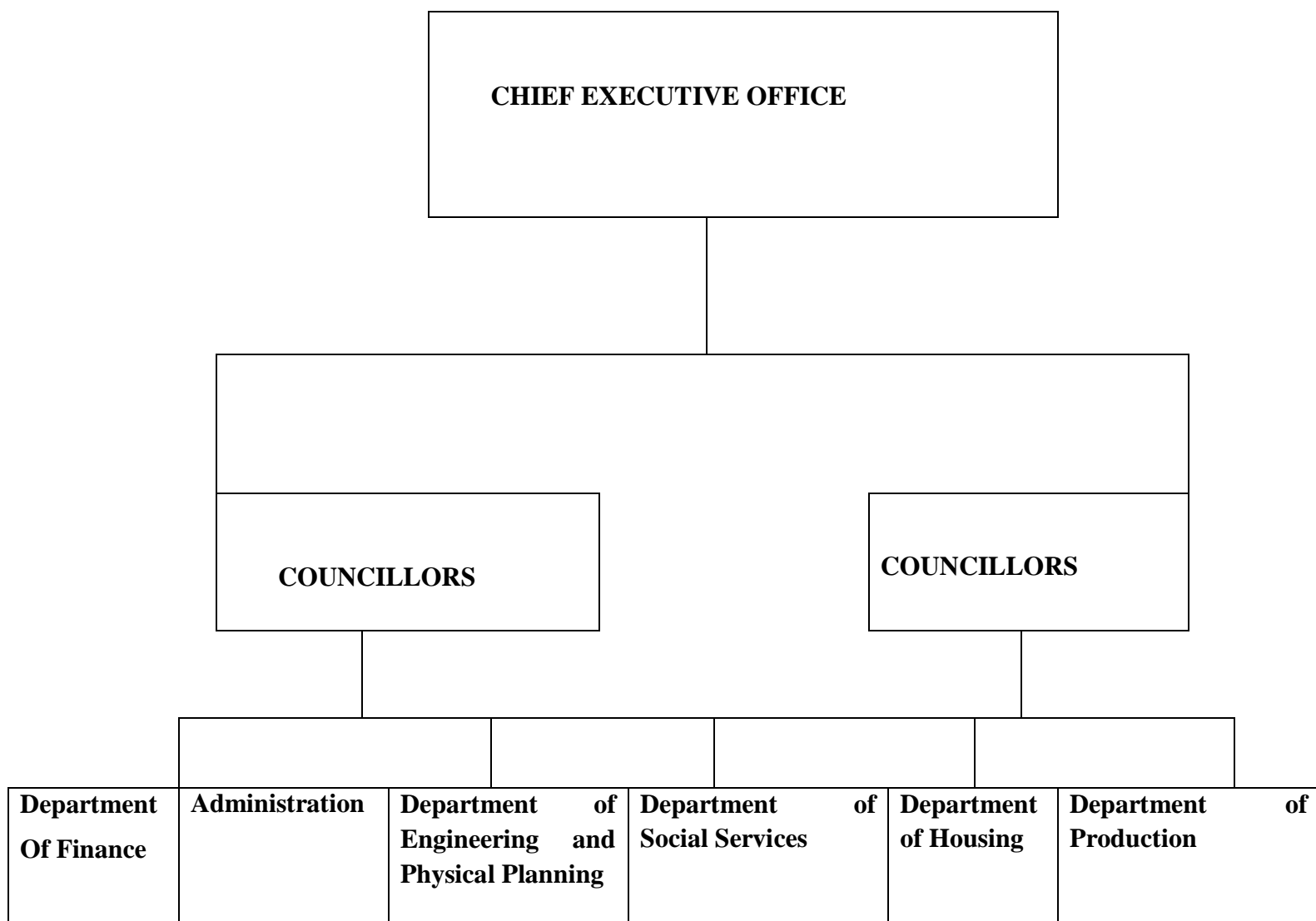
local authorities. Local authorities tend to be more circumscribed in their ability to modify their form of government and expand their service offerings.

## **RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS IN ZIMBABWE**

Before colonisation, local government systems in Zimbabwe's rural areas existed in the form of traditional chiefs. Colonial period local government system in Zimbabwe dates back to 1891 when the Salisbury Sanitary Board was established (Wekwete, 1988). However, Local government in the African Areas evolved rather slowly. According to Palley (1966) rural local governments can be traced back to the Native Boards established in 1931 which were later transformed into Native Councils after the passing of the Native Councils Act (1937). The African Councils Act of 1957 later established the African Councils which were amalgamated into fifty five District Councils through the District Councils Act of 1980 (Chakaipa, 2010) The colonial structures of local government were never meant to facilitate meaningful development. They were largely created in order to improve the colonial regime's ability to maintain law and order and to collect taxes. The organizational, financial and functional restrictions imposed on the African Local government units reduced them to agencies of the white minority regime.

Later on, Rural Councils and District Councils were amalgamated through the Rural District Councils Act of 1988 purported to end the dual system of local government in rural areas through the amalgamation of the Rural Councils and District councils into fifty eight Rural District councils which become operational in 1993. The main aim was to overcome the colonial legacy of separate development based on race.





**Figure 1 Structure of RDCs**

### **COMPOSITION OF RDCs**

RDCs are composed of the Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O) who controls all the council workers. The C.E.O work hand in hand with the councilors, the District Administrator (D.A), the central government as well as the Ministers responsible for Rural Development, Environment, Health and other departments. The C.E.O is linked to the heads of departments that are administration, finance, housing, production, social services as well as engineering and physical



planning. These heads then link with their subordinates on what should be done as per councilors and C.E.O's commands.

## **THE ROLE OF RDCs IN THEIR AREAS OF JURISDICTION**

According to the District Councils Act of 1980, the councils are the principal planning and development agencies within their jurisdictional zones. Mutizwa – Mangiza (1992) alludes that Zimbabwe's RDCs are directly responsible for the management of infrastructure and services at Rural Service Centres using their locally generated revenues as well as statutory allocations from the federal and state governments (RDC Act 1996:29: 13). The RDCs and local government are also responsible for supporting economic development and poverty alleviation. This is due to the increasing priority given to the decentralization of resources and responsibilities and to the strengthening of local institution (Mutizwa – Mangiza; 1992). Romeo (1998), revealed that at the district level, there is representation of the people, delivery of public services and infrastructure projects, management of a substantial district budget, raising local revenue, strategic planning for the district including infrastructure, land use and allocation and regulation of water and other natural resources. The RDCs, also act as responsible authorities for their areas of jurisdiction, are expected to cater for the needs of the local community by providing social and recreational facilities and encouraging the establishment of co-operatives or bodies that will entertain and or benefit the people socially or economically (Administrative Handbook of RDCs, 1992).

### **Provision of Social and Physical Infrastructure**

Romeo (1998) noted that, it is a mandate of the RDCs to provide public services and infrastructural projects. The RDCs are engaged in both social and physical infrastructure. According to NANGO (2010), social infrastructure includes the construction of schools for primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training centres, recreation and sporting facilities, hospitals and clinics, housing as well as cottages for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (O.V.C). Thus, from the above, the RDCs are administering the delivery of such services. For instance, out of the 131 schools in Chivi District, 118 primary and secondary schools are under the Chivi Rural District Council. Besides building these schools, the RDCs are also responsible for staffing and providing resources. According to Nango (2010), rural schools have the lowest



proportions of trained teachers, books, laboratories and other learning resources hence making high achievement difficult. For example, in Binga the trained teacher to pupil ratio is 1:61 while the accepted pupil to trained teacher in Zimbabwe is 40 pupils per trained teacher and the desired ratio is 28 pupils to a trained teacher. Thus, the RDCs are responsible for the educational services.

### **Health**

It is also the responsibility of these RDCs to promote the health sector through building of clinics and rural health centres, staffing and provision of drugs. According to WHO (2000), health refers to a network of people and actions that are in one way or the other concerned with promoting, maintaining, restoring and improving the health of society. The definition encompasses services provided by the responsible authorities, which include RDCs and these include the building up of clinics, hospitals and rural health centres. The Administrative Handbook of RDCs (1992), revealed that the provision of health services is one of the primary functions entrusted upon the RDCs and is profoundly encouraged by both the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development. The RDCs are also encouraged to establish Mobile Clinic Units. These are meant to service the communities in sparsely populated areas particularly in commercial areas where it is not economically feasible to establish clinics (Administrative Handbook of RDCs; 1992).

### **Recreation and Sporting Facilities**

RDCs are also mandated to provide recreation and sporting facilities, but there continues to be a lack of these facilities in communal areas. Recreation that has been provided by many RDCs is found in the beerhalls that are scattered around Districts. The RDCs are responsible for providing facilities such as tennis courts, golf courses and swimming pools for the communities especially in the Growth Points as well as in Rural Service Centres (Administrative Handbook of RDCs, 1992).



### **Provision of Physical Infrastructure**

According to Choate and Walter (1981), infrastructure refers to public works projects and services or is the physical network of a community that is its needs such as roads, bridges, airport, water and sewer systems and public buildings. It is the responsibility of the RDCs to construct, repair and maintain infrastructure such as roads, bridges, canals, sewers, reservoirs, furrows and culverts (RDC Act, 1998). It is responsible for organising contractors or agents such as the District Development Fund (DDF), Ministry of Roads and Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA). It is also the responsibility of local authorities to ensure the availability of electricity, telecommunications and postal services all around the Districts.

### **Revenue Generation**

The RDC functions also include embarking on income generating activities. Their main objective is to raise additional revenues so as to enable it to sustain itself; therefore it should be borne in mind that such activities should not operate at a loss. The RDCs according to the Administrative Handbook of RDCs (1992) should have a list of income generating activities which are intended to increase its revenue base. To reach such decisions, the council should thoroughly examine each project seeking advice from the council with financial information and to make financial decisions based on the concept of comparison of alternatives and looking into each income generating activity. Some of the projects engaged by RDCs include construction of beerhalls, lease collection which includes taxes, user charges, rents and rates, licenses and other projects. The income obtained from such activities will be used to pay the council staff including councilors, purchasing goods such as computers, repairing and servicing vehicles and the delivery of social and infrastructure services.

### **Environmental Protection**

The RDCs are also responsible for pollution control and good sanitation. They are mandated to ensure clean environments especially in public places such as growths points, rural service centers, commercial places as well as the stadia. According to the Solid Waste Disposal Regulation of 2007, the RDCs and the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) would be



encouraged to work in group like environmental sub-committee set up at ward level in terms of Section 61 of RDC Act Chapter 29:13 to disseminate information about control of pollution and enhancing sanitation. Those two institutions work hand-in-hand in reducing the rates of veld fires in their areas of jurisdiction. This means that they should be engaged in fire campaigns in order to protect the environment from veld fires. Thus, RDCs in Zimbabwe also play the role of pollution control and good sanitation in different places or districts and communities.

### **Protective Services**

The RDCs are mandated to provide protective measures and services in times of need. These include fire services, disease combating and pest control services. To ensure these, the RDCs should work hand –in –hand with other responsible ministries or institutions in order to prevent such dangerous disasters. Those agencies include the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Ministry of Health and Child Welfare and Fire Brigade to name a few. For instance, all the RDCs have representatives or officers who are responsible for health disasters. This will help in ensuring the combating of a number of diseases such as malaria and cholera. Although the RDCs work hand in hand with other agencies, they should have their own resources or protective instruments ready at any time be they for fire control or pest control.

### **Land Allocation**

According to the Communal Land Act Number 14 of 1987, the RDCs are also the allocating authorities within their respective areas of jurisdiction. In terms of the Communal Land Act, the RDCs are the land authorities and are therefore responsible for the allocation of land within their areas of responsibility. However, Makumbe (2010) noted that this allocation is carried out within the confines or provisions of traditions and customs of which it is commonly accepted that the traditional leaders are the custodians. This therefore means that whilst the Local Authority is land authority, land allocation is carried out hand in hand with the traditional leadership whose role is acknowledged and appreciated. Besides the above, the RDCs also decide or are responsible for planning the site location. This means that they decide to locate houses, shops, garages, industries and offices on appropriate sites. For instance, offices should be located in commercial areas whilst industries and garages are cited far away to avoid noise. However, to



ensure effective provision of services to the communities by the RDCs, the RDCs work hand in hand with a number of organizations, ministries and institutions. These agencies provide assistance in a number of ways which shall be discussed below.

## **ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS WHICH ASSIST RDCs**

As the responsible local authorities, the RDC control and give right to all projects and programmes initiated by several organisations. These organizations and institutions therefore work hand in hand with the RDCs and thus assist the RDCs in their responsibilities. These agencies include the government or state ministries and institutions, civil society and churches.

### **Government Institutions**

The government institutions which work hand in hand with RDCs include ministries, parastatals and agencies. These agencies promote rural development through the services they provide. For instance, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare help in the provision of drugs and staff training. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture also provide books, staff training and other educational facilities that improve the literacy rate. Other ministries which assist RDCs are the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, Ministry of Gender and Woman Empowerment and Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement. The District Development Fund (DDF) also functions in rural areas by constructing roads, bridges and canals. Agencies which work hand in hand with RDCs include Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) and Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA). These government parastatals assist the RDCs with cash, labour or instruments for project implementation.

### **Civil Society**

According to Narayan (2000), civil society refers to those groups, networks and relationships that are not organized or managed by the government or state. It covers a wide range of formal and informal networks and organizations including NGOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and networks of neighbours and kin. According to Edwards and Hulme (1992), CBOs are grassroots organizations managed by members on behalf of members. NGOs assist RDCs



play in social, political and economic sectors. According to Korten (1990), NGOs help societies in providing food during seasonal shortages, introducing safe water and sanitation systems, offering health care and health information campaigns or improving school buildings or community centres. Thus, they are involved in programmes and projects to do with health, water, sanitation, agriculture, human rights, food distribution and charity for the aged, disabled and orphans.

In Zimbabwe, a number of NGOs are assisting RDCs. These NGOs include CARE International in Zimbabwe, International Committee of Red Cross, Zvishavane Water Project, Oxfarm, Danai Children Care (DACHICARE), Red Cross, Jairos Jiri and Action Faim. Some international agencies in the Western countries also assist in the RDCs and these include World Food Programme (WFP), UDAID, Swedish International Development (SIDA), OPEL and Overseas Development Agency (ODA). According to Narayan (2000), most NGOs which operate in rural areas offer services such as health to combat diseases such as malaria, cholera and the killer scourge HIV and AIDS. NGOs are active in education, food and seed distribution as well as improving sanitation. According to Narayan (2000), NGOs are able to respond better to the local priorities and this has been credited as a reason for reception of NGOs in Africa. Thus NGOs assist RDCs in areas of responsibilities.

Some civil societies that assist the RDCs are churches. These include the Roman Catholic Church's, Catholic Development Commission and Lutheran Church's Lutheran Development Services. These organisations enhance rural development through the provision of food, clothes, and uniforms to the poor and disabled people. These services play a role in rural development because they enhance education, human development and energy to the local people so as to work or participate in the projects and programmes implemented by the RDCs, thus, assisting RDCs in accomplishing their roles. Although the RDCs are being assisted in several ways, they are still facing some challenges in their tasks and these challenges shall be assessed in this study.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was grounded on the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies so as to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing Chivi Rural District Council in the delivery of



social and infrastructural services. Questionnaires were the main quantitative data collecting tools and were administered to 75 residents of Chivi Rural District Council. Stratified random sampling was employed as the researcher stratified the district into wards before randomly selecting the 75 respondents using simple random number tables. In-depth interviews were carried out with Chivi Rural District Council officials and the business community. These were supplemented by Focus Group Discussions, which were used as ground truthing instruments. Observations were also used as a natural way of gathering information to see what transpired in the area under the jurisdiction of the council. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and graphs, tables and pie charts were produced.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **SOCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY CHIVI RDCs**

The Table below shows the social and infrastructural services that are suppose to be provided by Chivi RDC to the inhabitants of the district.

**Table 1 Social and Infrastructural Services to be Provided by Chivi RDCs**

<b>SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES</b>
Education	Building schools and Vocational training centres
Health	Constructing and repairing clinics, mobile clinics and maintaining the hospital
Social welfare	Building orphans, vulnerable children and the elderly cottages
Housing	Providing accommodation for government workers, and repairing council houses.
Environment	Building public toilets, providing bins and ensure refuse removal
Protective Services	Building shelter for keeping fire extinguishers, feet control and disease combat instruments
Sport	Building golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools and stadia
Leisure	Beer halls
Physical	Constructing and maintaining roads, bridges and public halls.
Water	constructing dams, canals, reservoirs
Utilities	Ensure the provision of electricity, transport services, postal and telecommunications

**Source: Chivi Rural District Council Records 2011**



Table 1 above, shows a variety of social and infrastructure services that should be provided by Chivi RDC to facilitate social and economic development. These services will result in the development of the district.

### **CHIVI RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON THE NATURE OF SOCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DELIVERED BY CHIVI RDC**

This section focuses on the views of ordinary citizens on the nature of service delivery by Chivi RDC.

**Table 2 Chivi Residents' View on the Nature of Social Services Delivered By Chivi RDC**

<b>Social Services</b>	<b>Chivi Residents' Views on the Nature of Social Services Delivered By Chivi RDC</b>	
	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
Education	<b>86</b>	<b>14</b>
Health	<b>97</b>	<b>3</b>
Social welfare	<b>63</b>	<b>37</b>
Housing	<b>69</b>	<b>31</b>
Environment	<b>94</b>	<b>6</b>
Protective Services	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>
Sport	<b>67</b>	<b>33</b>
Leisure	<b>76</b>	<b>24</b>
Physical	<b>67</b>	<b>33</b>
Water	<b>93</b>	<b>7</b>
Utilities	<b>64</b>	<b>36</b>

**Source: Field Survey 2011**



Overall, the respondents were dissatisfied with the nature of service delivery by Chivi RDC as depicted in Table 2 above. A high degree of dissatisfaction was registered on health service delivery, provision of water and sanitary facilities. In almost all Focus Group discussions held the residents agreed that water shortages, poor refuse removal and unclean public toilets have increased the incidence of diseases in the district. The residents agreed that, because of these problems, a large number of people suffered from cholera during the cholera outbreak of 2008 to 2009. The RDC Health Officer argued that these problems are perpetuated by the failure of the locals, particularly those at Chivi Growth Point, to pay some fees such as refuse removal fee and rubbish collection fee. This then result in infrequent removal of rubbish since the RDC suffers from finance shortages



**Table 3 Chivi Residents’ View on the Nature of Infrastructure Services Delivered By Chivi RDC**

<b>Infrastructure Services</b>	<b>Chivi Residents’ Views on the Nature of Infrastructure Services Delivered By Chivi RDC (in %)</b>	
	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
Building schools and Vocational training centres	<b>82</b>	<b>18</b>
Constructing and repairing clinics, mobile clinics and maintaining the hospital	<b>74</b>	<b>26</b>
Building orphans, vulnerable children and the elderly cottages	<b>72</b>	<b>28</b>
Providing accommodation for government workers, and repairing council houses.	<b>93</b>	<b>7</b>
Building public toilets, providing bins and ensure refuse removal	<b>96</b>	<b>4</b>
Building shelter for keeping fire extinguishers, feet control and disease combat instruments	<b>80</b>	<b>20</b>
Building golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools and stadia	<b>56</b>	<b>44</b>
Beer halls	<b>61</b>	<b>39</b>
Constructing and maintaining roads, bridges and public halls.	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>
Constructing dams, canals, reservoirs	<b>89</b>	<b>11</b>
Ensure the provision of electricity, transport services, postal and telecommunications	<b>80</b>	<b>20</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2011**



Responses to the infrastructural services listed in Table 3 above indicate that respondents were not satisfied with the work of the RDC. A Focus Group Discussion at Chivi Growth Point revealed that roads in Chivi District were really in a bad state, especially the dust roads from the Growth Point which include, the Chivi – Takavarasha, Chivi-Berejena and the Chivi-Davira roads. Most buses and commuter omnibuses do not reach those areas except for Mhunga Bus Service. There is absolutely no transport from Chivi Growth Point to Davira a distance of about 29 kilometers so people from Davira transport their goods through carts, wheelbarrows or on foot. Some people have resorted to the use grinding stones in replacement of grinding mills since grinding mills can only be accessed at Chivi Growth Point whose distance is very long.

A Focus Group Discussion at Sese Service Centre also agreed that Chivi RDC is failing to repair and maintain its buildings. These buildings which include schools, clinics and houses are now vulnerable to such conditions like the heavy rains and earth tremors. For instance, it was reported that, a number of buildings at Danhamombe Secondary School were affected by the tremor of 2006. In 2010, about 9 council houses were affected by the heavy rains because of poor maintenance.

## **REVENUE GENERATION AND SOURCES OF AID**

Chivi RDC raises funds locally through the collection of development levy, rates, license fees on business properties, regulatory charges, sale and leasing of land and property, taxes, charging fees for the services they provide as well as engaging in income generating activities such as the sale of alcoholic drinks. In addition, they receive government grants from central government. However, Chvi RDC finance department complained that it is extremely constrained in terms of financial resources that are available to them. The Assistant Finance Officer argued that the revenue estimates are always more than the actual revenue received, which means that there is always a shortfall. Table 4 below shows the revenue estimates versus shortfall from actual revenue received in 2010 by Chivi RDC.



**Table 4: The Revenue Estimates versus Shortfall from Actual Revenue Received in 2010 by Chivi RDC**

Source of Revenue	Revenue Estimate (in %)	Shortfall from Actual Revenue Received (in %)
Land, Property and Taxes	26	12
User charges	24	32
Income Generating Projects	5	82
Regulatory charges	1	18
Grants	24	16
Rents and Rates	5	54
Levies	1	78
Licenses	8	23
Others	6	8

**Source: Chivi, Finance Department (2011)**

Table 4 above shows that the revenue received by Chivi RDC in 2010 fell short of the expected revenue. Large shortfalls were recorded in levies, land, property and taxes, user charges and income generating activities. The majority of residents resisted payment of the development levy, arguing that they cannot afford it. The Assistant Finance Officer also revealed that not all residents pay the land fees because there are no up to date registers for land fees in Chivi District. User charges are those charges obtained from service delivery that include revenue from activities such as provision of water, refuse removal, sewer and affluent removal as well as the provision of health services at hospitals and clinics operated by the council. The revenue from these charges were insufficient to ensure smooth provision of water and other services that are paid for by the residence of Chivi since there was a shortfall of about 32% from the expected revenue. Revenue from central government grants is also insufficient to cover all RDC expenses. The money largely pays the salaries of RDC staff and also funds projects in the education and health sector. Therefore, the RDC is suffering from financial deficit. The revenue collected by the council is insufficient to pay council workers; to buy infrastructural instruments such as pipes, cement, tar, gravel and concentrate for road and bridge construction and other expenses of service delivery. This has resulted in the stopping of some projects such as the repair and



maintenance work of the road from Chivi Growth Point to Takavarasha, Chivi- Davira and Chivi Berejena roads. The projects are still incomplete because of poor revenue generation by the Chivi RDC.

Some other sources of aid come from NGOs and other private sectors. However, this may be in form of humanitarian aid such as food distribution, clothes and social welfare. Other NGOs such as Pump Aid, Zvishavane Water Project and Action Faim also help in the provision of water through the construction of dams and elephant pumps. For example, CARE International constructed the Zipwa dam, Nyimai Dam and some elephant pumps in Wards 6, 7 and 9 of Chivi District. Several water pumps were also constructed by ACTION Faim and Pump Aid in the District. It is also important to note that, some government parastatals also help in the provision of these services, therefore a source of aid. For instance, the District Development Fund, Ministries to do with Education, Health, Transport, Communication and the Environment. Even though Chivi RDC is being assisted in many ways, it is failing to provide satisfactory social and infrastructural services to the inhabitants of the District.

## **CHALLENGES FACED BY CHIVI RDC**

The challenges that were revealed were grouped into several groups, which are, financial constraints, unstable political environment, human resources constraints, lack of local participation, and infrastructure as well as massive population growth.

### **FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS**

#### **Failure of Ratepayers to Pay Charges and Taxes**

The failure of rate payers to pay charges and taxes has contributed to the constraints in the delivery of social and infrastructural services by the Chivi RDC. According to the Councilor for Ward 7 of Chivi RDC,

*“This problem has been noticed since the introduction of multiple currencies in early 2009 and as a result the RDC overpriced the service rates. Thus, it led the rate payers to ignore paying the rates and service charges. During that period it was difficult to obtain cash (forex) especially to*



*those who did not have sons and daughters who could send remittances from South Africa and Botswana.”*

The ignorance to pay rates also increased since the responsible staff could not follow up the payments. Moreover, the payers sometimes give up paying because of few council workers on counters. It was also commented that there is an increase of hawkers and vendors especially at rural service centers. This increase made the vendors to ignore to register to the council since there are no appropriate registers for the flea markets and vendors. If the rate payers were paying up these rates and rents effectively, this amount would have helped or contributed to buying of some infrastructural instruments and to provide other services to the inhabitants of Chivi.

### **Inflationary Environment**

Inflation was also credited to have been one of the constraints in the delivery of social and infrastructural service by Chivi RDC to its areas of jurisdiction. Because of inflation that had hit Zimbabwe, in 2008 many council projects, programmes, plans were stopped whilst underway. This environment left Chivi RDC on scratch for instance, out of 63 projects planned to be implemented in 2008 only 5 were completed by June. These projects were targeted on the delivering of social and infrastructural services that included road rehabilitation and routine maintenance, construction of structures at schools, clinic construction, electrification of schools, clinics and business centers, repairing of government houses and the district hospital.

Chivi RDC officials also pointed out that inflation had left the council in financial deficit since it started failing to pay its workers and this led to some of them resigning. According to the Human Resources Manager, about 23 workers withdrew and amongst them were 6 permanent workers and the rest were casual workers who worked as bus levy collectors, beer hall workers, garbage collectors and grounds men. This impacted negatively on service delivery since the workload was too much to the remaining staff. Since the council could not pay up its workers satisfactorily, those remaining staff worked lackadaisically since their pay was almost nothing. Council debts also increased. For instance, the Assistant Finance Officer of Chivi RDC said that,



*“We failed to pay up the loans borrowed. Therefore because of the increased debts in 2008, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development as well as the central government could not provide some grants for the year 2009. This exacerbated the poor delivery of services by Chivi RDC since the council was not able to boost its finances and provide the services, hence the failure of RDC to provide the services. This inflationary environment also resulted in the closure of Council beerhalls that is the Ngundu, Mhandamabwe, Madyangove, Takavarasha, Sese beerhalls and eating houses at those places. With this situation, little revenue was obtained and there rose a question as on how to use the money, to pay the workers first, to pay the debts or to deliver the social and infrastructural services”.*

The result of this inflationary environment was therefore withdrawal of workers, financial deficit, and increased debts. These therefore left the council from the scratch where it took a lot of time to resume and retrieve its finances. When the economy was a bit certain, Chivi RDC first looked at the payment of workers and debts and thereby ignoring to deliver the services to the communities and hence, the failure to deliver services. During that period no one could implement the projects which were left underway by the Chivi RDC. Probably if the economy was not affected by inflation, maybe the inhabitants of Chivi could have enjoyed services to include road rehabilitation repair and maintenance of bridges, construction of clinics and schools. Communication and electricity supply could have been provided also.

### **Inadequate Government Grants**

Inadequate government grants and loans, also contribute to the poor delivery of social and infrastructural services by Chivi RDC. In the year 2010, Chivi RDC received about 24% of the targeted total income grants. This was targeted to enhance development through the implementation of projects such as construction of houses, 5 clinics, road rehabilitation as well as the reconstruction of the stadia as well as the public hall at Chivi Growth Point. However, the plans by the council were diverted since the grants were not sufficient to cater for the above services. The council instead used the money to pay the staff per month as well as giving them allowances and back pays.



Inadequate government grants may-be due to corruption.

*“In August 2010, the Zimbabwe Rural District Council Workers’ Union (ZRDCWU) stated that each RDC worker should be given an allowance of \$35 but when it came from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development , it was put in the hands of the C.E.O. However, the workers could not receive the money until a lawyer was invited. Instead of the workers to grumble for that allowance they could have been working and planning how to utilize the available resources so as to deliver the services to the inhabitants of Chivi. Said a committee member Chivi Rural District Council Workers Union*

Therefore, because of such issues of corruption, the workers stopped working towards service delivery and started working towards their allowances. But, this does not dismiss the fact that inadequate governments grants leads to the failure of service delivery by the RDC. If the government grants were adequate, maybe Chivi RDC could have electrified rural services centres, schools and clinics, improve house or stand servicing as well as building vocational training centres.

### **Poor Budget Performance**

The data collected also revealed that, poor budget performance also contributed to the constraints in the delivery of services by Chivi. According to some council staff, poor budgeting also contribute to the failure in the delivery of services to the inhabitants of Chivi District. The Planning Officer commended that the poor budget performance has been due to the weak link between financing, planning and budgeting. He said that the council is not planning within the limits of available resources and this means that if the budget is planned not considering the availability of resources, the result might be too high demand of finance to meet the budget or too much resources may lead to wastage of resources especially the natural resources such as land water and forests.

The other problem is that when the council prepares its budget, it does not include all department representatives. For instance, the budget which was conducted in 2010 did not include the planning and the workers committee representatives. Therefore, the result of this was the



planning department requesting for money which was not on the budget as well as the annual plan. Hence, the target aimed for by the budget could not be achieved. However, because of this, Chivi RDC failed to deliver some of the services which were planned for.

Chivi RDC also failed to provide the services to the inhabitants of Chivi since some strategic plans which are prepared with elaborate visions and missions are not participatory and realistic. The Engineer argued that many of the strategic plans and budgets are crafted by a few technocrats and thus lack of ownership and a shared linkage, hence making them inoperative from start. Therefore because of the weak linkage the planners failed to implement some projects, for instance, combating diseases such as cholera outbreaks, malaria and other emergency services. For example, some residents during Focus Group Discussions blamed Chivi RDC for exacerbating the cholera outbreak of 2008 in the District. This was due to the lack of apparatus to control and combat the cholera outbreak, as garbage and rubbish was scattered all over the District Services Centre exacerbating the cholera incidences. This resulted in deaths and illness of the district's people and hence the failure of Chivi RDC to provide the social services. If the RDC had included some technocrats, engineers and auditors in their budget, maybe those people could have raised a point to budget also for emergencies but because of that it resulted in poor budget performance since some funds were later diverted to other programmes and projects.

### **Unstable Political Environment**

The political environment in Zimbabwe since 2007 has been a constraint in the delivery of social and infrastructural services by Chivi RDC. This political environment according to the residents did not provide a conducive environment for project implementation. From a Focus Group Discussion, it emerged that, many, if not all of the NGOs had their activities and projects stopped because of the 2008 election campaigns which began in 2007 and this had a bearing on the implementation of planned projects and programmes. During the 2008 election campaigns which started in 2007, all charity organizations were stopped suddenly and this impacted negatively on the recipients of the services. For instance, the construction of elephant pumps by Action Faim in Ward 29 of Chivi District was stopped and the Chivi RDC failed to finish up



these projects since they did not have the funds to finish these projects. This was because Chivi RDC had not planned for these services and more so, the RDC planners and other technocrats failed to finish what had been started by others since most resources used by donor agencies are imported from mother countries yet RDCs mostly use available resources. From these discussions, the residents accused the government of chasing these NGOs since they were suspected to be in support of the opposition party that is the Movement for Democratic Change instead of ZANU PF. This was mainly because most of the mother countries of NGOs that is USA, Britain and England are the ones who imposed some sanctions in Zimbabwe. Therefore, they supported the MDC party. As a result the water provision challenge perpetuated.

The other reason why the political environment in Zimbabwe was mentioned as a challenge is that it perpetuated the stopping of NGO projects since some ZANU PF officials like the Councilors of Wards 11 and 17 distributed the resources owned by NGOs to the ZANU PF card holders and supporters. This worsened the poverty in Chivi since those who were supposed to receive aid were not assisted. This led to the withdrawal of CARE International and this created tension between the NGOs and the Chivi RDC since it is the responsible local authority and what happened was not according to the document signed between the RDC and the NGOs. With such situations, the RDC wasted some money when they were trying to negotiate with the people in the whole district not to mix politics and NGO activities through awareness campaigns. It was however, too late since most NGOs had withdrawn such as Action Faim, International Red Cross, Zvishavane Water Project and World Vision.

Another political reason for the poor delivery of social and infrastructural services by Chivi RDC is the tension between the ZANU PF Councilors. Just like the fighting of parties, their Councilors are still quarrelling in the council meetings and during the decision making process for power and prestige over all issues to be discussed. This therefore has resulted in disagreements and thus putting the RDC committee on a dilemma about what to do concerning service delivery. For instance, when the ZANU PF car for Chivi District broke down, some ZANU PF councilors supported the idea that the RDC should support the party by donating a car for the campaigns whilst the MDC councilors disagreed since the main business for the RDC is for service delivery not for ZANU PF campaigns. However, since the council Chairman was a



ZANU PF councilor, cars were sometimes diverted to the campaigns and this negatively impacted on the delivery of services such as refuse collection, transportation of building materials to schools, clinics stadia, public halls, bridges as well as for emergency use.

## **LOCAL PARTICIPATION**

Chivi RDC is facing some constraints in the delivery of social and infrastructural services due to lack of local participation. Some of the residents blamed themselves for having some negative attitude towards participation. From Focus group Discussions, the residents agreed that these attitudes to participation are a result of resistance to change by councilors and hence the locals will be revolting to his commands.

*“Some of these councilors are illiterate and old aged so they tend to forget and not to contribute to policy formation and enforcement of by-laws” said a resident during a Focus Group Discussion.*

Therefore, the local people will be ignoring their Councilor, as a result, resistant to participation. For instance, people of Ward 17 refused to participate in the construction of a clinic. This was because they were revolting to their Councilor who was a dictator and was too much in politics such that people were disappointed on him. When the Councilor influenced the council to stop their activities, the council did not know that it was because of the Councilor and it constrained the delivery of services by Chivi RDC. The project was stopped until a new Councilor was elected in 2008. Some residents argued that the projects done by the RDC are time consuming therefore local people tend to prefer projects by the NGOs. These projects do not take time since resources will be available. Therefore, the locals preferred the NGO funded projects since there are no requirements of strength and power as compared to RDC projects such as brick moulding and water fetching for building and construction. This however, creates dependency syndrome and ignorance to decision making processes since participation means people discussing, draft plans and development proposals when they are still at the formative stage in a hope of influencing official decisions and action (Makumbe - 1996). Hence, the ignorance to participate by locals did not motivate Chivi RDC to plan projects targeting development, therefore a constraint in the delivery of services. Other respondents also argue that the reason for not



participating in the RDC projects is that the people are not involved in decision making processes and therefore the RDC does not know what the local people want hence, the failure to deliver services by Chivi RDC.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES CONSTRAINTS**

Human resources are another factor which contributes to the poor delivery of services by Chivi RDC. These problems include lack of qualified personnel, technocrats and auditors. Lack of qualified personnel makes work vulnerable to shortfalls and mistakes. This might also mean that these unqualified staff and the old aged might not be able to make correct records in statistics, population and resources. For example, there was the recruitment of some casuals just after the inflation era when the permanent staff had withdrawn. This had a negative impact to both the RDC and the inhabitants of the district since it took long to train these workers and hence to distribute the resources and services. Lack of auditors and responsible staff for education negatively impact on the delivery of services. For instance, there were reports of corruption and, money shortages in the early 2000s and up to date because of lack of auditors. The council rarely hire auditors and sometimes after a long period of time. This will not allow the hired auditors to start auditing cash books for previous years and hence, will not see the reasons for the shortage of money for the delivery of social and infrastructural Services. If the auditors are present at any moment maybe there could have been good records of money and that could enhance better delivery of social services such as electrification of rural service centers, provision of water reticulation as well as the servicing of stands.

## **CONCLUSION**

Chivi Rural District Council faces a number of challenges in the delivery of social and infrastructural services, chief among them being financial constraints. This is due to a number of cases that include the failure of rate payers to pay taxes and charges because of high rates. Inflation of 2007's effects has left Chivi RDC at the scratch and hence causing bankruptcy and increased debts. Inadequate government grant and poor budget performance also contributed to the financial constraints that hinder the delivery of services by Chivi RDC. Poor budget performance was as a result of the weak link between planning, financing and budget as well as



lack of auditors, technocrats and other department members in budget planning issues. Other factors identified are the unstable political environment, poor local participation, and human resources issues which results in corruption and mismanagement of funds. These factors have some negative results to the delivery of social and infrastructural services to the inhabitants of Chivi as well as the development of the district. These include the withdrawal of transport operators, increased incidences of diseases and destruction of buildings. There is therefore need for Chivi RDC to improve its capital base through following up the payments of user charges, rates, levies and rents as well as opening up closed beerhalls. The RDC should improve human resources by employing qualified personnel as well as hiring internal and external auditors. There is also need for the RDC to improve budget performance by linking budget, planning and finance. Every department should participate in budget planning, annual plans as well as strategic planning. It is important for Chivi RDC to involve the District inhabitants in the decision making processes so as to improve project implementation.

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